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PM accepts Sanusi's decision to step down as MB of Kedah

LANGKAWI, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he has accepted Tan Sri Sanusi Junid's decision to decline nomination as Menteri Besar.

"I didn't ask him (to step down). Tan Sri Sanusi met me on Wednesday (in Langkawi). He handed me a letter, asking that he be relieved (of the post).

"I had a brief discussion with him and heard his reasons why he wanted to withdraw. And I agreed," the Prime Minister told a Press conference after touring the Lima '99 exhibition.

Dr Mahathir said he had not decided on a replacement for Sanusi. "If there are any applications, you can submit them," he said in lighter vein.

He agreed with a reporter's question that the election results in Kedah were a factor in Sanusi's request not to be considered. "Yes, that factor did exist. He was of the opinion that he did not succeed. That was his assessment."

On his meeting with Kedah Assemblymen who expressed their wish that Sanusi remain as Menteri Besar, he said it was an "internal matter".

On Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon's position in Penang, Dr Mahathir said Koh had not yet handed the letter of appointment to the Yang diPertua Negri. "I suppose he will because I have not withdrawn it".

On Gerakan's claims of a move to undermine Koh, Dr Mahathir said: "That's not my business". Adding that the Gerakan had retained the Chief Minister's post, Dr Mahathir said that the BN discouraged any action that would weaken the coalition.

On the resignations of two Gerakan Assemblymen, he said he would study the matter carefully but dispelled talk that the MCA had asked for the Chief Minister's post.

He also gave an assurance that his Cabinet would be formed as soon as possible. "As quickly as possible means five, 10, 15 days".

On First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin's desire to step down as soon as possible, he quipped; "As soon as possible may be five years, 10 years".

On Lim Kit Siang's resignation as DAP secretary-general and subsequent appointment as the party's chairman, he said; "As usual ... theatrics!"

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